THE Reconstructionist

J. XII. October 4, 1946 Tishre 9, 5707 No. 11

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REALITIES AND VALUES

cated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of l's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Subscription $2.00 per year; 10c per copy; foreign 25c extra; membership in the Foundation, $5.00 per year, including subscription to *The Reconstructionist*. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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THE

Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN A DISILLUSIONED WORLD

ROSH HASHANAH this year finds the world sicken with disillusionment. The peace which men fought has not come. The wounds have not been healed; the sufferers have not been comforted. And in the chancelleries of the once-united nations there is earnest talk of war. During the war, men and women of good will with foresight warned that our generation must not expect Utopia to emerge out of the conflict, that progress would be slow, that they never counted on so terrible a foe. They never dreamed that people would revert so insanely to the thinking, the scheming and the plotting of the pre-war days. Indeed, international life behaved today not only as though the atom bomb had never been devised, but as though the war itself had not been fought.

If religion is to function in our civilization it must somehow give the courage to go on hoping and working; and to do this it must cure men first of the skepticism that comes with disillusionment. For disillusionment implies that beliefs which were cherished were false beliefs, and, because they have proved to be false, the conclusion that men leap to is that no beliefs henceforth deserve to be trusted. It should be the function of religion to demonstrate the fallacy underlying this assumption, and to establish new foundations for faith and for work.

What was the belief about which men are today disillusioned? It was the belief that experience is the great teacher. This implied that events would, of themselves, change the hearts of men. When the wicked saw the evil of their ways, they would change their ways.

This was the great illusion. It reckoned without human nature. This belief was held by people who did not realize that men *forget*. To forget is often a blessing, when remembering is too painful to bear. But this blessing becomes a curse when men forget what they should remember for their safety. Two years ago, mothers and fathers were ready to sacrifice anything so their sons might return home alive and well; today they can hardly remember what it felt like to have a son under fire.

Men not only forget; they also develop callousness of soul. Speak to them of the massacre of six million Jews, tell them of the tens of thousands torn to pieces in a flash by the atom bomb, and they cease to listen. Their minds refuse to grasp the truth. Their ears are dulled. Their feelings are numbed. And if they

lapse back into their old ways, there is no reason for disillusionment with people; there is reason only for disillusionment regarding the mistaken notion that events alone are enough to correct the errors of men.

Men's minds are changed not by experience, but by the proper *interpretation* of experience, by ideas, by thought, by conscious weighing of life by the standard of *values*. Religion should function as the interpretation of life in the light of spiritual values. Religion can help us set up norms to live by, and to judge life by. These norms, or ultimates, like peace and brotherhood, must become so much part of us that we instinctively react to every event in accordance with these norms. Everything that happens should be subjected to these tests: Is it calculated to make for justice, brotherhood and peace? Does it make for one world? Does it make for the welfare of *all*? Does it add to life's worthwhileness?

Those truly religious souls, who have not made their churches or synagogues or mosques merely instruments of power or merely ivory towers, are not disillusioned today. On the contrary, they are stronger in their faith than ever before. They see before them the vindication of age-old teaching, first taught to the western world by our own ancestors, the teaching found in Deuteronomy: Man is offered the choice of life or death, good or evil, and he is bidden to choose the good, life. That teaching has two parts: one, that disaster comes from violating the moral law, and two, that man has a choice betwen life and death. The experience of mankind bears out the truth of this doctrine. The Jewish people, so long as they adhered to that doctrine, never suffered disillusionment. That doctrine must be taught to this generation. It will save this generation from disillusionment, too.

As the new year dawns, this fact is clear: if men and women will sensitize their minds and their souls to the basic moral values, will meditate upon them day and night, and learn to judge the events of the world by the light of these values, faith and new strength will be theirs, and the new year will be truly new.

OUR PEOPLE'S CRUCIAL PROBLEM IN THE YEAR 5707

THE Jewish people face the new year of 57 with extreme trepidation. The year drawing to a close has witnessed no improvement in the lot of our people. On the contrary, our position in the world has definitely deteriorated. Our rights have been nullified, our needs disregarded, our faith betrayed. Not only have our open enemies, the avowed anti-Semites, renewed their campaigns of abuse and vilification, but many of our friends in government office have grown tired of trying to help us and have been looking for excuses to wash their hands of responsibility for the solution of the Jewish problem.

In how different a mood did we hail the approach of the year 5706! Then we were full of hope. The war had come to an end; the diabolical forces of nazism and fascism had been overwhelmed; the reconstruction and unification of human society under a United Nations organization was being projected; and in the brave new world, we could reasonably expect that the part our people had played in the struggle would be gratefully recognized, our title to Eretz Yisrael confirmed, our refugees assured a home, and the right to civil and political equality with all other citizens guaranteed in all post-war treaties.

It is true we were even then deeply grieved by the loss of six millions of

eople. But with the horror of the Nazi ttermination methods fresh in people's inds, we comforted ourselves with the ought that our dead had not died in in, that the brutal way in which they d been slaughtered would be a portent the world of the degradation to which en and nations can sink once they flout e divine law of justice and lovingkindss. We trusted that the sympathy oked by the tragic plight of our people uld reveal itself in acts of considera-n for the harried remnants that surved.

But now our six million martyrs have d a second death. They have died m the minds and hearts of men. The y peoples that were loud in commiserng with us over our loss, are now plang the restoration of Germany to ecomic and political power, while the Jews erated" by the Allied armies still guish behind barbed wire and are viily and illegally barred from entering r national home.

The tragedy has gone even beyond this. ile we glory in the heroic and selfificing spirit of the *Yishuv,* in the stance it has been offering to the tyry and inhumanity of the British rule Eretz Yisrael, we cannot but deplore condemn the undisciplined and imal acts of the Sternists and Irgun . We cannot help lamenting that brutalities of the colonial British me in Palestine have at last succeedn demoralizing a section of the Jewpopulation and bringing disunity into ranks of the *Yishuv.* Palestine seems farther than ever from realizing the old dream of a homeland in which "shall sit every one under his vine under his fig-tree, and none shall them afraid."

t we dare not yield to despair. There ways a future. That is the message e New Year. And the best cure for despair is action, not blind, confused and meaningless action, which finally ends in exhaustion, but action that reckons intelligently and fearlessly with the forces which threaten our destruction.

We Jews suffer from all the ills that afflict the modern world. But in addition to that, we suffer from a complete lack of status. Other peoples have at least their representatives who can meet with those of rival peoples and adjust differences by bargain and compromise, and by appeals to common humanity and common justice. We lack that. We have no status among the peoples of the world. Our persons, our freedom, our property —personal and communal—our right to a livelihood—all these are subject to the decision of international conferences in which our voice is not even heard.

The old League of Nations recognized the existence of the Jewish people in the terms of the Palestine Mandate. It created a machinery by which, at least in respect to Palestine, Jews could present their case through the Mandates Commission to the League. Moreover, clauses specifically guaranteeing the rights of Jewish minorities were included in the treaties resulting from the first World War (though there was no adequate machinery for their enforcement). But in the drafting of the new peace, the nations try to pretend that the Jewish people does not exist. They would like to regard a German Jew, for example, as a German of Jewish religion, forgetting that our six-million dead were slain not as religious non-conformists and heretics but as Jews.

We Jews must unite to secure the full recognition of our right to be represented in the councils of the nations, at least on issues that directly affect us as Jews. Every attempt to force further disintegration upon our people, and to squeeze us out of collective participation in the

life of the modern world must be resisted. To insure our recognition as a people we Jews must create without delay a social structure for Jewish life along representative democratic lines. Along with the effort to create the new communal set-up, the leaders of all our national organizations must unite in insisting on the representation of Jewry in all international bodies that deal with problems involving the future of the Jewish people.

We owe this not to ourselves alone, but to humanity as a whole. For we cannot waive our right to secure our future, without betraying the similar right of all other peoples whose continued existence may be inconvenient to some of the Big Powers. If Jewish resources of means and men, are applied to the solution of this problem during the year just begun, we need not lose faith in the ultimate triumph of our cause.

A NEW TYPE OF JEW

IF the spotlight on Eretz Yisrael could be moved for a moment from the misery caused by British policy, and directed to the way of life of the Jewish population, it would illuminate another phase of the Palestinian scene which spells confidence and hope. We should then be able to see clearly in focus a new type of Jewish personality. This distinctive type, as much a home-made product (*tozeret haaretz*) as the famous citrus fruits of Palestine, is our strongest guarantee that the progress of the *Yishuv* will continue.

We have long been aware that life in Eretz Yisrael has had a beneficial effect on the character of the Jewish settlers. They have lost the hypersensitivity of so many Jews in the diaspora. A boisterous voice on a bus is passed off as an annoyance, but not as an occasion for the thought, "What will the Gentiles think?" In a positive way, we have taken pride in how Jews have adapted themselves to new occupations, to every kind of work necessary in Palestine, and in particular in the zeal with which Jews have taken to hard physical work. The emphasis on work, especially on self-employment, affects the entire economic structure of the land and generates a sense of responsibility in each individual. The nationalization of land, the cooperative enterprises, the dominant role of labor in the political cultural and social life of the community —these are all evidences of the spirit of social equality and cooperation that seem to pervade the majority of Palestinian Jews.

Since 1936, the personality of the Palestinian Jew has been further strengthened. The provocations by Arab and British have served only to arouse the determination of the *Yishuv* to resist evil. Jewish resistance takes the form of defense of Jewish rights and the continuation of normal activities in the face of exasperating efforts to liquidate the achievements of Zionism. Life goes on proudly and defiantly. The self-reliant and daring Palestinian Jew of today is at the opposite pole from the cringing Jew described by Chaim Nachman Bialik in the "City of Slaughter." Neither the death nor the life of *that* ghetto type of Jew had any meaning. His life was a prayer to escape death and his death was merely an end to his own misery. Not so the Jew of Eretz Yisrael. Both life and death have assumed a significance unknown to the Jewish victims of oppression and pogroms. Life is dedicated to the creation of a Jewish home, but upon a foundation of social justice. Death, too, when encountered in the pursuit of that end may be a means to its attainment.

While the world stood by and let Jews be slaughtered, the *Yishuv* sent its men

l women behind enemy lines to rescue usands. While diplomats barter lives oil, Palestinian Jews continue to risk r own lives to save those of their thers. No one prays that by some acle he personally may escape from that befalls others. Resist! is the chword of the new Jew. The miracle come. But it will be a miracle wrought God through men imbued with the teousness of their cause and ready to and die for it. Ideals possess power. se in the hands of the Jews of Eretz ael will prevail over the forces now yed against them. That is the hope the New Year, which comes from .

ALITIES AND VALUES

THOUGH THERE IS NO NEED ews to be represented in all branches e nation's economy in exact propor- as the rest of the American popula- it certainly is in the interest of Jewry ave a diversified economic structure, ave the feeling that whatever work rs can do Jews can do also. In Pal- e, where penetration into all branches e country's economy is necessary, our le have demonstrated this capacity. hey are demonstrating it in America ll. A press release of the Jewish Ag- ural Society contains interesting in- ation about Jewish participation in ican agriculture. It is estimated more than 100,000 Jews in the United s are farmers. This is not a very number in proportion to the total h population, but in view of the fact Jews have been detached from the or centuries and have had no long- ng agricultural tradition, these fig- epresent no mean achievement. The e shows that Jews have made a s in virtually every branch of agri- culture, that they have availed themselves of the best scientific methods, many Jews being included among the leading agricultural scientists, that almost all Jewish farmers own their own land, that here, as in Palestine, they cooperate to mutual advantage, and that they participate in the life of the Jewish and the civic community.

▼

DR. URIAH Z. ENGELMAN, OF the Department of Research and Information of the American Association for Jewish Education, has publicized some interesting facts about recent developments in Jewish education. The information is based on a study of 135 communities in 36 states containing about 73.7 per cent of the American Jewish population. The survey shows an increased enrollment, an intensification of the curriculum in many schools by increasing the length or number of the sessions, a tendency to begin the Jewish education of children at an earlier age and to continue their schooling through a later age, increased appropriations for educational purposes by Community Councils and Federations, increased attention by institutions of higher Jewish learning to the training of teachers, and a new interest in Jewish education on the part of organizations that had hitherto not concerned themselves with it, such as the American Jewish Committee. Although a little more than half of the children were enrolled in Sunday schools, many more of those enrolled in week-day schools attend 4 or 5 times a week than attended 2 or 3 times. But there is a grave dearth of teachers and of adequate school buildings.

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THE PALESTINE LABOR MOVEMENT is more than a movement for the betterment of the workers' economic conditions. Despite its emphasis on

collectivism and the sharing of goods, it never forgets the individual and his needs. This is evident in the solicitude it shows for developing the personal talents of the children of its members. Thus the Central Cultural and Education Committee of the *Histadrut* (the Federation of Labor) runs a People's Conservatory of Music to enable workers' children to get a musical education. The Conservatory is located in Tel Aviv with 22 branches in all parts of the country. It is attended by 650 students. Beside giving individual instruction to the pupils, each branch offers training in student orchestras.

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INFORMATION SERVICE, THE bulletin of the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, contains, in its issue of September 7, an interesting summary of the Annual Report of the Civil Liberties Union for 1945-46. The bulletin quotes from the report the statement that "the gains in civil liberties which had surprisingly marked the war years continued. The balance sheet of the essential gains and losses . . . shows 34 favorable items against 22 adverse." Among the favorable items listed are the Supreme Court decisions extending freedom of the press, affirming the supremacy of the civil over the military power, admitting alien pacifists to citizenship, and outlawing racial segregation in interstate bus travel. Though decisions of the Supreme Court bearing on civil liberties were all of them favorable, the record of Congress was "not so good." Even Congress, however, though notoriously reactionary in many respects, has to its credit the enactment of a bill admitting East Indians and Filipinos to citizenship and establishing a small quota for East Indian immigration.

THE STATE COMMISSION FO Post-War Public Planning in the state New York has recently published a par phlet containing its construction progra and estimates of the cost involved. Tl total expenditures would amount $160,632,474. These are apportion among 8 departments of which the D partment of Mental Hygiene is schedul to receive $79,053,685 or almost half the total amount. The funds of this d partment are to be used for mental hc pitals, schools for mental defectives ar the Craig colony for epileptics. Wh does it mean that almost half of t state's construction budget is allocated mental hygiene? Does it mean that t conditions of life in modern times a such as tend to make neurotics of peopl Or does it mean that a need which a ways existed is only now coming to recognized, and that the exceptional large amounts allocated to mental h giene represent an attempt to make u for past neglect? However we may lo at the situation, it gives little occasi for complacency.

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AT THE RECENT RECONSTRU tionist Seminar on Youth Leadersh one of the young people in attendan told the following incident as typical the Jewish attitudes of a section of o American Jewish youth. The director a certain Jewish Community Center co ceived of the idea of a public youth *sed* on *Pesah*. He broached the subject some of the young men and they we quite enthusiastic about it. But, they i sisted, it would have to be a stag affa When questioned what their objecti was to having young women participa they explained that their girl frier looked with disdain on religion in a you man, that they considered such a man *shlemiel*. That girls should snub Jew

(*Continued on Page* 28)

he Quest for Religious Truth

By EUGENE KOHN

THERE have been few eras in history when men felt s secure than they do in our age. War H economic crisis alternating in fre- nt cycles have us almost literally htened out of our wits. We feel inse- e not only in our persons, but in the llectual and moral props on which nkind in the past relied. The eight- th century was the "age of reason." h profound reliance on human intel- nce, men did not hesitate to call into stion the popular superstitions of what passed for science and the venerable mas into which religious doctrine had tallized. The nineteenth century was age of empiricism. Man discovered ure. He felt that he could rely on its formities, that he need but observe it ly to master it and to make himself oughly at home in the physical uni- e. But in our day both reason and rvation, both logic and science, both H and matter seem to have betrayed We have no confidence either in man n nature. Man is no longer a rational g, but a rationalizing one, and all his cination seems but the method in madness. Nature is no longer a law- d mechanism easily controlled, but orehouse of terrific forces that man unleash but not dominate.

Quest for Certainty and the t for Truth

ttle wonder that we hear a great deal about the quest for certainty. Re- ists hail this as evidence of man's n to God. They see in the humilia- of the human spirit the occasion for ous revival. Man's pride of intellect pride of power have been laid in dust. With the shattering of man's self-reliance, he is bound to revert to reliance on God and traditional religion. That is the hope of traditional religionists. And indeed there are many arrows that point toward its realization. Great numbers of men are finding refuge in authoritarian orthodoxies of every description. The Catholic church is making many converts from the ranks of liberal Protestantism and even from Judaism. (Franz Werfel, for example, was more Catholic than Jewish in spirit). Within Judaism itself, neo-Hasidism, Agudaism, and the romantic mysticism of men like Ludwig Lewisohn and, in a less traditional vein, Waldo Frank, are representative of a similar trend.

But skepticism about man and nature is a frail foundation for a religious faith. The quest for certainty does not necessarily lead to "eternal verities"; it may and too often does lead to dark and sinister superstitions. It has, for example, led the German people to the diabolism of Nazi religion. Hitler had attained certainty. He never doubted the validity of his jungle philosophy, of the doctrine of the *Herrenvolk* and the apotheosis of the *Fuehrer*. He, too, had no use for rationalism or empirical intellectualism. He put all his reliance on "intuition." In the last analysis the quest for certainty may lead men to abdicate the responsibility inherent in their spiritual freedom, just as the quest for security led men to abandon the responsibility inherent in their political freedom. Religious faith must never abdicate the free and responsible exercise of conscientious judgment. It cannot permit the quest for certainty to divert it from the quest for truth. If then we are to engage in the quest for religious truth, we must give some

thought to the question: How can we distinguish between truth and error in religious belief? How can we know which doctrines to affirm and which to reject?

Three Factors in Religious Belief—Intuition, Reason and Experience

The medieval philosophers assigned two criteria for the validity of religious beliefs—revelation and reason. They did not question the reliability of reason wherever reason could function, but they denied its adequacy as a source of religious truth. In this denial they were philosophically justified, for, in the last analysis, all reasoning rests upon premises that are not themselves derived from reason. Rational judgments are based either on axioms, that is to say self-evident propositions, or on the data of experience. Only if the premises are true can reason arrive at true conclusions. The whole elaborate structure of logic and mathematics, the two preeminently rational disciplines of human culture, is built up by implication from a few fundamental concepts that are anterior to any rational judgment. Such concepts, for example, are the familiar categories of time, space and causality. Our confidence in them is intuitive and it is not misplaced.

Also in the realm of spiritual values, in our reasoning about the goals and motives of human conduct, we are under the necessity of assuming the validity of certain concepts. As in logic and mathematics, so also in religion and ethics, there are axiomatic premises which are accepted intuitively. The medieval philosophers were, therefore, not mistaken in perceiving the human need for faith as well as for reason as a source of religious truth. Their mistake was solely in accepting faith in a particular historic tradition as axiomatic, and hence in assuming that tradition to be revealed. Not revelation but intuition must be added to reason or logic as a source of religious truth.

Moreover, the critique of rationalism by the medieval philosophers did not go far enough. In our popular thinking, the alleged conflict between religion and science is considered identical with that between faith and reason, as though science were preeminently rationalistic. The truth, however, is that progress in the natural sciences began when men discovered the inadequacy of pure reason as a clue to the nature of the world in which we live. As long as the pursuit of knowledge was based wholly on logical inference, the horizon of knowledge could not expand beyond the implications of a few self-evident propositions. No application of syllogistic reasoning from undeniable axioms could have discovered the circulation of the blood. Harvey discovered it not by reason but by observation.

Not rationalism but empiricism is the dominant characteristic of modern science. In order to be true, a proposition must not merely conform to reason; it must conform to fact. The greatest discovery of modern science has been the experimental method, the insistence on submitting theory to the test of experience or of experiment, which is nothing but controlled experience.

In our religious as in our scientific thinking, we must have a respect for fact. But it is important for us at this point to note a difficulty in the validation of religious beliefs which does not exist in the validation of scientific theories. Since science deals with the external world, the natural scientist can hold in suspense his decision on a scientific theory and put it to the test of experiment, without any personal commitment. In religion, however, it is impossible to employ the experimental method, since we would have to be both the subjects and the objects of the experiment, both the experimenter and the material on which the experiment

made. Moreover, we cannot postpone decision on vital moral issues until we verify all the assumptions on which are moved to act. There are times hen a suspended judgment is impossible, cause our very indecision may prove cally decisive, like the hesitation of a n crossing the street in heavy traffic. ligious belief thus of necessity involves *a priori* commitment, a moral hazard nsciously assumed.

This characteristic of religious belief quently leads people to jump to the nclusion that religious beliefs are not at subject to empirical verification. But mere fact that the *test of experiment* not be applied does not invalidate the *of experience*. A religious belief stands much greater chance of being true if an be shown that, by commiting themves to it, people have achieved results ich are recognized as life-enhancing. at we cannot exercise, in our quest for gious truth, that control over experie which the scientist can exercise in laboratory, does not change the fact t, in the realm of religion as in that cience, we do learn by trial and error. perience remains a good teacher even ugh, to profit by his instruction, we e to pay the matriculation fee of a sonal commitment to what we desire hope may be the truth.

rom the foregoing analysis it is apent that, in the quest for truth, we t reckon with intuition, with logic with experience. By reckoning with e elements and applying the criteria ropriate to them we can arrive not ltimate and absolute truth, but at a n which will go far toward restoring 's self-confidence and feeling of atneness in the universe.

is therefore not merely an intellecexercise, but a matter of vital impore that we learn to apply intuitional, al and empirical criteria to the testing of our religious faith. These three elements that enter into our religious thinking never function separately but always in combination. Nevertheless, for purposes of clarification, we do well to show how each can be applied in verifying our affirmation or denial of specific religious doctrines.

Intuition as a Criterion of Belief

It should be clear, that in validating religious truth, the term *intuition* must not refer to any individual hunch or prejudice. It must refer to a basic presupposition without which needs that are deeply rooted in human nature cannot find fulfillment. Without these axioms of our religious beliefs, human life becomes either impossible or worthless. Involved in this statement, there is already an implicit assumption, the assumption that life has value. This is not a conclusion at which we arrive; it is a premise of our religious thinking and feeling; it is implicit in our very will to live.

We may accept as fundamental intuitions of the religious and ethical consciousness the following propositions, among others:

1. The human being is not merely a body or an organism; he is also a person, or, in traditional terminology, a soul.

2. Other human beings are equally with ourselves, persons or souls. They should, therefore, possess an equal right to the maximum fulillment of their personal wants.

3. All men are organically akin, belonging to the same biological order or species.

4. All men are equally dependent on their natural environment, and sense that human life is part of the life of the universe and akin to all other forms of life.

5. Human life thus partakes of a larger life beyond the reach of man's comprehension, and human personality and hu-

man society express an emergent purpose that transcends them and upon which they depend. That purpose is not capricious; it is manifest both in natural and moral law, and is commonly identified as Divine.

Thus belief in God, the fundamental concept of religion, and in the "ought," the fundamental concept of ethics, are apprehended primarily through intuition.

If, therefore, we can assert about any religious belief that it is indispensable to our self-fulfillment as human beings, we are justified in maintaining it on intuitional grounds. But such self-fulfillment must refer to wants of our universal human nature and not to the gratification of mere personal vanity, group interest or partisan prejudice. The purely individual experience, the incommunicable personal vision may or may not convey significant truth. But the mere fact that it is accompanied by a feeling of certainty is no evidence that it is true. The fact that Joan of Arc heard voices is no proof that they spoke a divine revelation. One of the milestones in religious thinking was the conclusion reached by our Rabbis when they declared that, in matters of law "we pay no heed to a *bat kol*" (a heavenly voice). (*Talmud, Baba Metzia* 59b.)

Logical Inference as a Criterion of Belief

Most of the tenets of any religious tradition are not wholly matters of intuition. The historical faiths are a product of human culture. They thus express the inferences that religious teachers and leaders have derived from the intuitions and the concrete experiences of the group. As soon as the beliefs of a group rise above the level of mere subconscious fantasy and reach the height of reflective thinking, men discover contradictions in their traditional beliefs which they seek to resolve. It is at this point that reason or logic is inevitably invoked to reconcile the inconsistencies in the accepted beliefs. No two contradictory statements can both be correct.

It sometimes happens, however, that intuition and experience confront us with ideas which are apparently in conflict, yet neither of which we are prepared wholly to reject. In grappling with some of these paradoxes of belief, reason may sometimes be baffled and have to admit defeat. But the fact that the contradiction between the two "truths" has not been resolved must be taken to mean that neither is *absolutely* true, that each must be accepted with qualifications and reservations.

Thus Rabbi Akiba posed the paradox of freedom and determinism when he said: "Everything is foreseen, yet freedom is given." (*Abot,* III. 19) There is an obvious contradiction between these two propositions when taken as absolutes. Yet we cannot afford completely to reject either of them. Our intuition of causation makes us think of events as a series of causes and effects, each effect becoming in turn a cause, so that the very last term of the series is already implicit in the first. But we have also an intuition of freedom. Our very selfhood is based on the consciousness of choosing between alternatives. If that consciousness were illusory, there would be no meaning to the self as a subject or initiator of action.

Wisdom, therefore, demands that we assign a relative truth to both of these contradictory intuitions and an absolute truth to neither. We can believe both in freedom and determinism provided we realize that there is a boundary between them that we cannot locate or define. We must believe that there are alternatives between which we can choose, but that our choice must not be arbitrary and can not violate any demonstrable law of cause and effect. Law and freedom must both

assumed to be part of reality and our bility to resolve the apparent contradic- n between them must be ascribed to limitations of the human mind. We st, therefore, sometimes trust our in- tions even where they present a para- which baffles our reason.

The realization of this necessity by ad- cates of traditional faiths has sometimes to the glorification of paradox and a radical repudiation of rational con- ency as a criterion of truth. Men have n asked to subscribe to the doctrine, *redo quia absurdum*" ("I believe be- se it is absurd.") There is no justifica- n for this attitude. Our failure to be hundred percent reasonable does not redit reason as a method for arriving truth. The fact that the ladder we ess may be too short to reach a par- lar height is no proof that it does offer a secure foothold for climbing ar as it reaches.

onsistency thus remains a criterion religious truth, even though we may etimes find it difficult to bring all beliefs into a consistent pattern. ertheless, if we are serious in our t for truth, we will constantly en- or to achieve a maximum of consist- among all our beliefs. We will not ontent, for example, to operate with nception of God that is as full of radictions as that which most reli- s people have inherited from tradi- The traditional conception of God ains such contradictions as these: od is the All and, being absolute, r changes and has no wants; yet God called upon to create the world. God mplete lord of nature; yet He has erform miracles to effect His purposes. is a loving Father; yet God is the cause of all suffering. God is just; He discriminates in favor of one peo- by revealing His will to them alone. ould take us too far afield to attempt to resolve all these contradictions. Moreover, the attempt cannot hope to succeed, because the human reason is inadequate to a complete comprehension of God. Yet it is possible to arrive at a God-idea, which, while leaving much unexplained, resolves enough of these paradoxes to give an intelligible meaning to the word, *God*, one that makes it possible for thinking people to worship Him without sacrifice of intellectual integrity.

I have elsewhere devoted an entire article * to elucidating such a conception of God, of which I can here give only a brief summary. Most of the contradictions arise from our thinking of God on the one hand as a person like ourselves, except that He is endowed with vastly greater power and virtue, and on the other hand, as absolute Being, timeless, spaceless, changeless, beyond all need for action, emotion or even thought. Since we apprehend God intuitively as manifest in our will to live, it is best that, in our inability to comprehend ultimate reality, we think of God as that Power or Process that makes life possible and of supreme value, not only our own life, but, in accordance with the intuition that our life is an organic part of the life of the universe, *all* life. God is thus, the *He Olamim,* eternal and universal Life.

When we apply to God such ethical attributes as justice, love, faithfulness, we mean that those same qualities in men and in society are life-enhancing, are part of the Spirit that makes human life both possible and worthwhile or holy. God's justice does not then depend on His being conceived as a judge who punishes and rewards. Penal systems are means of establishing justice; they do not constitute justice. But the universal recognition in every human society of the need

* The Attributes of God Reinterpreted" in *The Reconstructionist,* Vol. VI, No. 15.

for justice is evidence that justice is divine, that the life of the Universe *means* justice to prevail among men, that perfect justice is the law of God, even though it may nowhere find complete embodiment in human life. When we say that God is perfect, we mean that all perfections, all ideal goals of human endeavor are implicit in the character of the life process, determining the direction of human progress and the measure of the success of all human enterprise. They are real, as is evident by their influence on human life, and God is the name which we give to express their total reality. When we speak of God as infinite and eternal, we give voice to our intuitive faith that, no matter how far man can extend the horizons of knowledge in time and space, he will find further evidence of God, as the Spirit that gives value to life.

When we say that God is all-powerful, we do not mean that at any particular moment he can avert an evil that humanity or nature has brought about. What we mean is that anything that is evil, in presenting an obstacle to our experiencing life as worthwhile, can be overcome, and eventually will be overcome by God, that it will be converted into something that is not evil, just as the destructive power of the electric discharge has been put to any number of beneficent uses through our discovery and application of electric phenomena.

And when we insist on belief in a personal God, we must not imagine that God can be understood as being a person whom we can influence in the same way as we influence other human beings by entreaty and flattery. We mean rather than we experience God personally, that we cannot understand ourselves without assuming a God who is both in and beyond us. We all feel morally responsible, but when we ask ourselves to whom are we responsible, we find that our sense responsibility is ultimately to All Li The fact of human personality is re the fact of the relatedness of all hum persons to one another is just as real. S too, is the unity in nature of man and else that exists, since man is undeniab subject to natural law. The reality that Unity of purpose that is both i minent in man and transcends him a unites him with all that exists, is wh we mean by belief in a personal Go God is no mere physical force that c be interpreted mathematically in terms motion or energy. He can be understo only with the help of introspectic Hence we intuitively think of Him Spirit and not as material substance, n as an abstract quality of material thin

Experience as a Criterion for Belief

In all religious traditions, the conce tion of God and of what constitutes t will of God or the Law of God is det mined not merely by inference from i tuitions but by inferences from expe ence. What is religious tradition if n an interpretation of the collective expe ence of a group from the standpoint of quest for salvation, for the realization the meaning of life? As interpretations experience religious beliefs must be su jected to the pragmatic test, to verific tion by trial and error, as well as to t test of logical consistency.

This is the test which orthodoxies all kinds most stubbornly resist. T long opposition of religion to science is manifestation of this resistance. Intuiti and logic do not vary from age to a but every age brings new experienc and every new experience brings with new knowledge which must be fitted in the pattern of our religious beliefs.

The greatest contribution of mode science to religion is precisely the realiz tion that religion, like every other aspe

human culture, must change if it is ot to deteriorate into mere superstition, to an anachronistic and irrelevant relic a by-gone age that can have no effec- ve influence in guiding the course of ents. The Fundamentalist slogan, "It as good enough for father and it's good ough for me," is dangerous doctrine. should be regarded as rank heresy, as, deed, a form of idolatry, the blind orship of a man-created concept in place the Living God, who reveals Himself all the events of life.

In the pre-scientific era, the tempo of chnological and social change was so w as to be almost imperceptible. The ljustment of religious belief to the new rcumstances of life was so gradual that en religious innovators were not aware at they were introducing changes in re- gious belief. They thought they were pounding tradition. But in our own y, unless we recognize the need of de- erately revising religious doctrine to nform to newly discovered truth, the screpancy between our religious tenets d the assumptions by which we actually e becomes so great that our religious ofessions become irrelevant to our daily es.

A complete revolution in our religious aluation of tradition is thus needed. hereas, in the past, a blind acceptance tradition was regarded as loyalty to ligious truth, in our day the willing- ss to change traditional beliefs when ese have been contradicted by new ex- rience must be recognized as the de- and of loyalty to religious truth. Our thers, for example, could consistently lieve in the revelation of the Torah th all its miracles and theophanies. othing in their direct experience sug- sted a better hypothesis to account for e world as they saw it and life as they ed it. But in our day, when we de- pend on the scientific interpretation of natural law and of social phenomena, we cannot accept that hypothesis as true. Any profession of belief that contradicts the assumptions which underly our scientific outlook on nature and on man, is mere verbalization. An early novel by Meyer Levin, *Yehudah*, contains one episode about a certain Hasid in Palestine who would not insure his crops because to do so would argue a lack of faith in God. When we insist on taking out insurance on our property, it is a clear evidence that we no longer have the same religious beliefs in God's providence that our fathers had, even though we may verbally profess the same creed. If our religion is to serve us as our fathers' religion, in a prescientific era, served them, our religious beliefs must conform to the beliefs that underly our behavior in our secular life.

The modern Jew cannot believe in the literal revelation of the Torah, though he may revere it as the record of his people's quest for religious truth and the Law of God. He has gone beyond it not only in his scientific, but, to a great extent, in his ethical thinking. And once we deny the literal revelation of the Torah, we must, in the name of religious truth, deny the doctrine of the Chosen People. For that doctrine rests on the premise that Israel is the unique channel of God's revelation to mankind. If we believe that the spiritual truths contained in the Torah came into Israel's possession by natural and not supernatural processes, it is logical to assume that all other peoples as well as Israel can attain to an adequate knowledge of God. To assume, as some profess, that Jews possess an inherent racial genius for religion is without scientific warrant, since religion is not a hereditable characteristic. That assumption is also ethically dangerous since it violates the fundamental prin-

ciple of human equality which, as we have seen, is one of the axioms of our ethical thinking. These examples must suffice to show the importance of the empirical criterion for the testing of religious truth.

Does the revision of religious belief detract from the importance of religious faith? Not in the least. Since we learn by trial and error, the only way for arriving at religious truth is to live by those assumptions which intuition, reason and experience commend to us as true. These assumptions, although later experience may prove them inadequate, are never wholly discredited, just as the mistaken hypotheses of science are never wholly discredited. The observations of the movements of the planets that were accounted for by the Ptolemaic conception of the stellar universe were not discarded by Copernicus, however different his picture of the universe was; they were merely differently interpreted. Similarly, the religious experiences that produced the Bible and the Talmud cannot be disregarded, but they must be differently intepreted, in a way that also includes, in a consistent pattern, the spiritual experiences of later generations. A reconstructed faith that takes cognizance of modern experience still remains a faith, a belief in, and a commitment to, propositions the truth of which can be tested only by living in accordance with our belief. But we must never assume that we possess absolute religious truth, that we have arrived at the end of our quest. As long as we pursue that quest honestly and do not permit ourselves to be halted in it by any fixation arbitrarily set by traditional doctrine, we shall find that it gives meaning and worth to life, that our reliance on intuition, reason and experience help us to grasp the reality of God, to find self-fulfillment in His service, to feel at home in His world.

A Problem of the Hebrew-Speaking Home

By EVELYN LEVOW GREENBERG

The following article discusses the difficulties encountered by Jewish parents in America who want to train their children from infancy to speak Hebrew at home. Whether the exclusive or predominant use of Hebrew in the home is desirable in the American environment is a moot question. But since there are Jewish homes, however few, in which Hebrew is spoken, its use to best advantage in the training of the child justifies our bringing the problem here discussed to the attention of our readers. We would welcome expressions of opinion from our readers not merely on the problem discussed in this paper, but on the larger and more fundamental problem, whether the Hebrew-speaking home is desirable in America.

—EDITORS

THE recent success of undertakings like Camp Massad and the growth of Ivri Zair has focused attention on the Hebrew-speaking movement. Educators have pointed with pride to these young Jewish children who are at home in the Hebrew language. Work has been done to organize them into Hebrew-speaking groups, to encourage them to read Hebrew literature, to become interested in Jewish art, etc.

All this activity is for the most part aimed at the select group who already know Hebrew well enough to use it in their daily lives. And it is important that these children should have their forces stimulated and channelized through the efforts of a movement like Ivri Zair. But very little has been done to make pos-

e the enlarging of this magic circle. There is not a single organization with crete plans to interest or assist young ents in training their children to speak brew. It is understood that such a up will forever be a minority in the ted States. And because of this asption, one can understand though not done the fact that there are no atpts to propagandize the idea among masses of our people. But the opinion widespread that this minority is esial to the well-being of the American ish community. Yet even young Jews the education and background to n it find little assistance anywhere. re is a complete lack of published k for them to use. They find no group ch has, as part of its activities, a pron of encouraging them and providthem with the material to overcome r uncertainties, both linguistic and hological. Spoken Hebrew in the ted States is somehow expected to sur- as a kind of latter-day miracle.

Hebrew- Speaking Home the e of the Hebrew Movement

may be argued that all the efforts rganized Hebrew education are, from very nature, dedicated to increasing number of those who understand and Hebrew. But in reality this assumpis far from true. Any examination ne lists of children at Massad and in r Hebrew-speaking groups will reveal true state of things. These children the *meyuhasim* of Jewish life. Almost yone of them is the little prince royal me prominent Jewish family. His ew knowledge has been gained as a t of great financial or personal sac- on the part of his parents.

ne tuition fees of the best modern *vot*, though they may be too low to the cost of a child's education are, theless, a heavy burden on an average income. As a result, financial considerations are an important factor in limiting the number of these students. Even they are not ideally equipped. They do have a fine background of Hebrew knowledge but most of them must first learn the vocabulary of daily living after they become part of a Hebrew-speaking group.

The real core of the unit, containing the most vital and creative elements among the American born children at, for example, Camp Massad, is composed almost entirely of the sons and daughters of rabbis and educators, children who have been reared in a Hebrew environment from earliest childhood. Some have attended *yeshivot*. (It is needless to point out the strain on the family budget of a Hebrew school teacher or rabbi who wishes to send two or three children to a fine school.) The other youngsters have learned Hebrew as the result of unceasing effort on the part of their parents.

A Heroic Undertaking

Many of these families live away from New York, in parts of the country where Jewish educational facilities are limited. They have been confronted, almost from the time of their children's birth, with the problem of creating a Jewish atmosphere in alien surroundings. This, of course, is a problem which Jews have had to face for several generations. When, however, it is complicated by the determination to have one's children speak Hebrew, the struggle becomes truly a heroic one.

There is no need to elaborate at great length on the work which these parents have been doing for the past fifteen or twenty years. A survey of the situation as it exists today will suffice.

Let us consider a typical case. A young Hebrew teacher and his wife, living in a fair-sized middle-western community, wish to have their child speak Hebrew from babyhood. The father and mother,

both products of New York City Hebrew schools and Jewish organizations, have acquired a fairly good knowledge of Hebrew. But they want their child to go further than they did. They are convinced that by having the child become bilingual from the start of his career, he will speak with greater ease and fluency and he will eventually be able to concentrate more of his study hours on Jewish learning rather than grappling with the rudiments of vocabulary and grammar. They plan to speak only Hebrew to the child and to have him acquire his English from his contacts with his American environment.

The main burden of this activty will fall upon the mother who necessarily devotes most of her time to her home duties and the care of the baby. From the start she must set about acquiring a new vocabulary, for she did not meet up with diapers and double boilers in her courses in modern Hebrew literature. The large authoritative dictionaries prove overwhelming since they give several words for each English term and an inexperienced person is unable to choose the one with the correct shade of meaning. She corresponds with friends and classmates who, she thinks, may help; she gets the lists that Massad has mimeographed; she discovers the *Milon Ha-mitbah* which can be ordered from New York; she spends *Shabbat* trying to memorize long columns of new words for foods, furniture and baby clothes. Gradually, as the child becomes more aware of his surroundings, the mother gains both ability and assurance in coping with her new problems. In addition both parents must keep doggedly reminding each other to speak more Hebrew despite their awkwardness in dealing with the phrases of daily usage. And of course they try faithfully to keep up with their reading of Hebrew books and periodicals despite t hundred and one other matters deman ing their attention.

The Want of Appropriate Educational Material

When the child gets old enough recognize pictures, the mother starts ca ing about for illustrated baby boo There are none to be had in Hebre She buys the usual colored booklets a writes in Hebrew words. She spends hou assembling original ones with pictur cut from magazines and using her ow lettering. There are no substitutes for t dozens of charmingly illustrated boo which other youngsters have. There is li tle time during the day for the moth to improvise games to take the place *London Bridge* and *All Around the Mu berry Bush.* She feels she should ha more rhyming poems, more little song more pictures, more toys and games tha she as an individual has the time energy to prepare. And, alas, her trai ing and talents have not made her t combination of artist, writer and musicia which the situation seems to require.

Even when the child is four and fi years old, the dearth of material co tinues. Palestinian books prove difficu to adapt to the American scene. Musi and stories for the Jewish kindergart prove inadequate for a child who has a ready acquired a richer background. Th result is necessarily a compromise, an the mother is frequently nagged by th worry that she is not giving the chil even a small fraction of the plaything which other children have.

Let us see what is wrong with the con ditions I have noted. As has been state before, there is no group, not even th Hebrew-speaking organzations, to whom such young people can turn. Those wh are fortunate rely on their personal con tacts with teachers and friends active i

brew circles to help them. But there is arge group of graduates of Yeshiva lege, Herzlia, the various schools of Jewish Theological Seminary, and the er rabbinical schools who would be to raise Hebrew-speaking families ey knew where to find encouragement information.

Basic Needs

There are two basic needs which a tral group could satisfy. The first is ct as a clearing house for all the ex- g material which is now scattered and efore unavailable. The second is to nsor and encourage the publication of work.

am certain that those parents who e successfully taught their children to lk Hebrew will share what informa- they have with those now in need t. For instance, they probably know ns of excellent stories, jingles and es which would save others hours of k and anxiety. And their experienced ce would prove of immeasurable e.

he fundamental need, however, will exist—that is for the creation of a le new file of material in Hebrew for lren under five years of age.

t this point, it should be noted that of the following discussion applies equal emphasis to the field of Jew- material for English-speaking children. pite the fact that educators have in nt years been stressing the importance indergarten training, a survey of pub- rs' catalogs reveals that the entire of titles (books, games, holiday pic- s, etc.) for use with children of all up to seven years, including many h are essentially teacher's manuals, ber not more than twenty-five. Of e possibly three or four are aimed at crucial age group from two to five.

The Kind of Material Needed

I should like now to return to my main thesis. From the time a child is a year and a half old he is interested in pictures which he can identify and should be provided with large, sturdy books which will mirror the world around him. The books should be composed of attractive, colored illustrations and Hebrew phrases in large modern type, and there must be several of them, allowing for choice and variety. I believe that especially in dealing with the very young child it is essential to present an integrated American Jewish scene which will be true and complete. All the symbols of Jewish life cannot be crammed into one set of crowded covers. The specifically Jewish items should be included in whichever group of familiar objects they fall. Food, clothing, the furnishings of the home, the animals the child recognizes, the activities in which he engages, are all-embracing classifications. So for example, among the household articles which he sees are the candlesticks and the *Havdalah* spice-box. He knows that he eats *hallah* as well as rye bread and that his father sometimes wears a *talit* over his clothing. By combining all aspects of his experience in this way, the Hebrew-speaking child will become adjusted to his dual background without being aware of conflicts and inconsistencies.

The earliest children's books naturally contain only a few lines of descriptive prose. Next come those with more complex illustrations and with two-or-three-sentence narratives or rhymed poems of the Mother Goose type. Despite their seeming simplicity, they are extremely difficult for the average adult to compose. In order to do so, he must look out at the world with the clear and innocent eyes of childhood and write with the bold, fanciful touch which stamps the best nursery rhymes and folk tales. The

creation of such little poems for children of a year and a half and older is essential. For it is in this field that the mother, forced back upon her own resources, is most inadequately equipped. Great talent is required if the child is to accept the verses and acquire through them a rich vocabulary which will retain the real flavor of the language.

By the time a child is three years old he wants to possess his own story books. He cherishes fiercely a whole set of tales which he will want re-read scores of times until he has memorized them page for page and word for word. There are dozens of such English story books on the market. The best of them are attractive hard-covered books, small enough for the child to hold and carry easily, printed in large, clear type, with delightfully imaginative illustrations.

There are absolutely no such books printed in Hebrew in America. Those which have been published in English for Jewish children are pitifully few and every one of them is based upon our festival cycle. There is no reason for this lack of imagination and originality. We have a wealth of material from which wonderful stories could be fashioned. And they could be stories with a lively, vigorous touch whose contents children would love and remember long after they had forgotten the more clumsy and artificial classroom texts which are later used to convey to them the same information.

Every aspect of Jewish life can become a source for adventure stories. In America there is the *shul,* the home, the Hebrew school, the daily customs, the so-called Jewish foods, the holidays (of course), the need to rescue less fortunate brothers across the sea and any number of other points of departure. There is also the whole collection of rabbinic legends and parables, all of them infinitely superior in moral content to the popular Grimm's fairy tales. Jewish history can be utiliz from such widely different aspects as Bi lical heroes, the scattered Jewish co munities all over the globe, and ear Jewish settlers in America. The Zion achievements in Palestine supply an u paralleled stream of stories. When ce tered on the tractor, the water towe the planting of trees, the irrigation sy tem, the harvest of new crops, they c easily compete with current juvenile f vorites like *Props, the Helicopter,* ar *The Tired Trolley.*

Almost untouched is the entire field o toys and games. The crude Hebrew a phabet blocks now on the market coul be improved and augmented by the in troduction of puzzles, games, constructio sets with pieces to make possible th building of a synagogue or a colony a well as a castle. Dolls with the costume of historical Jewish characters would a so be popular.

It is possible to continue at grea length in relating all that could an should be done. Perhaps it will be sug gested that imports from Palestine coul relieve the shortage of supplies in man of these categories. This, I believe, is un likely. Hebrew children's books (none o them on the very youngest age level) ar received here in small quantities and sol at high prices. They are markedly in ferior in paper and print job to Ameri can products, some of them being too flimsy to survive a single reading. And the illustrations are quite foreign to America. A typical street scene is com plicated by the presence of camels and autos on the same road, of oriental and modern buildings standing side by side.

The fact remains that there is no well-known material which would aid parents of pre-school youngsters in creating a Hebrew atmosphere. Publishers, no doubt, are more eager to put out books which

l be bought in quantity as school texts older children. But it is unforgiv- e that no organization has come forth h plans to help those embarked on this ture or to interest others in undertak- ing it. For when such a program will be initiated it will go a long way toward making the *bayit ivri* less of a curiosity and more of a bulwark of the American Jewish community.

Random Thoughts

THE aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiro- ma is vividly pictured in a series of sodes which are described by John rsey in his graphic report in a recent mber of *The New Yorker*. Among m is one about Kiyoshi Tanimoto, a tor of the Hiroshima Methodist urch. Tanimoto was one of the few be unhurt when Hiroshima was bed. As he passed by the burning dings in which the victims were pped and met the wounded who were ing from the flames, we are told that was overwhelmed by the shame of g unhurt." In his guilt he turned to right and to the left and said to some hem, "Excuse me for having no bur- like yours." As he approached the urb and he met people from the ntry streaming in toward the city to p, he heard some of them exclaiming, ok, there is one who is not wound-

erhaps that is the way we American s ought to feel, when we recall the million martyred dead of our people. "Overwhelmed by the shame of be- unhurt!" And should not each of us— we think of our people in Palestine g under the constant tension of cease- provocation on the part of the British, yet carrying on and building as did ancestors of old with a trowel in one and a sword in the other for self defense—say to them, "Excuse me for having no burden like yours?"

* * *

The same pastor Tanimoto was called to the side of a rich Japanese, Tanaka, who was dying of his wounds the day after the bombing of Hiroshima. The pastor read to him from the 90th Psalm. Never were its words more appropriate. The over-powering message seemed at last to have found a fitting occasion. "For we are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." These words are as much out of place at the ordinary funeral as would be a sudden outburst of thunder and lightning. But when man brings upon himself such earth-shaking disaster, through no cause other than his own inhumanity, then, and then only, is it proper to utter those fierce and macabre words, "For we are consumed by Thine anger."

* * *

But what of the ethics of using the bomb? The reporter mentions the fact that, among the survivors in Hiroshima itself opinion was divided. Some took the atom-bombing as the inevitable consequence of total war. Others still retained a sense of horror at the thought that the last restraint to the use of a weapon liable

to wipe out the human race was finally removed.

One of those interviewed, a Catholic priest, concluded his report to the Holy See, with the query: "When will our moralists give us a clear answer to that question?"

One would like to hear from those who contend that, unless religion or conscience can speak with that authority which only revelation or the Absolute can confer, we can have neither religious nor moral obligations. We doubt whether any one would presume to give a clear answer to so urgent a question either in the name of divine authority or of some moral absolute.

After reading the harrowing description of what happened to Hiroshima's 100,000 who were killed outright and the thousands who kept on dying during the weeks and months after the bombing, we cannot help asking ourselves wherein, except in its enormity, was that less horrible a crime than the bombing of the King David Hotel, where only one hundred people were killed. By what perverse logic is the taking of a hundred thousand lives of non-combatant men, women and children a mighty, heroic act of war, and the taking of one hundred lives of officials of a government that is driving thousands of people to their death a cruel and dastardly act? The blowing up of the King David Hotel is unquestionably to be condemned, but, by the same logic, so must also the destruction of Hiroshima.

But some will say, "Did not the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the war?"

In the first place, the war would undoubtedly have ended victoriously for the Allies without the use of the atomic bomb.

Secondly, are we so sure that the very use of that new weapon has not created a situation which is liable to end in the destruction of mankind?

"When will our moralists give us a clear answer to that question?"

When our government is prepared to spend two more billions to educate moralists to be as nearly expert in planning the instruments of life as the scientists of atomic energy are in planning the instruments of death.

* * *

Dr. Ralph Macdonald, secretary of the department of higher education of the National Education Association, deploring the drop from 22 per cent in 1920 to 7 per cent this year in enrollment of students in teachers' colleges, reported that Russia, in her economic poverty, spent $13 billion, or 20 per cent of her national income on education, while we spend on education less than $3 billion or less than 2 per cent of our income.

"The victor will be the teacher not the soldier," he added.

* * *

The forces of human history sweep us on as though we were mere flotsam. What, then, is the use of trying to understand the events we cannot control? Suppose men had allowed that question to deter them from studying the heavens on which they could not make the least impression? How far would they have gotten with the knowledge and control of the phenomena of matter and light? May we not ultimately learn how to govern our own individual lives through a better understanding of the political and economic forces in whose grip we are held and of the great world events in which we are caught up?

M. M. K.

Book Notes

A FREUDIAN KING DAVID

ID THE KING, by Gladys Schmitt, al Press, New York City, 1946.

DAVID The King attempts to execute that most dif- literary feat—to bring to full-bodied in terms relevant to contemporary an ancient character in his remote g. The feat is carried off with amaz- if not absolute, success. The major lls in the writing of historical fiction, Schmitt eludes with skill and grace- ase. The Biblical scholar, if he ever s to read fiction, will find little to at. Was David the actual slayer of th the Philistine? The Biblical rec- s confused and offers two alternate ons. The author has chosen what to aturalistic mind appears as the more account. In this whole massive , in which every Biblical incident ant to the period is elaborated in n by motivation and in width by rich iption, this reader found but a single de that is incongruous with the Bib- setting. The description of the rites urning at the Prophet Samuel's bier es from primitive religion not from Bible.

en more difficult than faithfulness to y, actual and possible, is the prob- of medium. Here the book touches eights. In a prose that fairly sings, uthor has caught the slow majestic m of the Bible. There is no attempt itate the Biblical style. Such parody, e hands of a modern writer is bound ng false. Avoiding imitation, Miss itt wields a style not simply dis- ished in its own right but perfectly matched in its rich mellowness with her theme. A reader unfamiliar with the Bible will find it almost impossible to tell where the author leaves off and direct Biblical quotation begins. The prose of Thomas Mann is intricate tracery and is often obscure. Miss Schmitt's writing is limpid. One can see to the bottom at a single glance. Moreover, it is sustained. In this regard, it amply fulfills Joseph Conrad's injunction that a work of art must carry its justification in every line. Such writing is an event in American literature.

The central problem for critical reflection is, of course, the author's interpretation of the main characters. Here the critic may take issue with Miss Schmitt's viewpoint. It was inevitable that sooner or later a Freudian would come upon the strange triangle of Saul, David and Jonathan. When David lamented over Jonathan: "Thy love has been more wonderful to me than the love of women," the case was clinched for the Freudian. Thus, throughout the book, there hovers over the relationship between David and Jonathan the sickly sweet aroma of the abnormal. It is made to dominate David with such obsessive power that even Jonathan's death cannot exorcise it. There is only one instance in the narrative books of the Bible where the love of a woman for a man is spoken of—that of Michal's love for David. Add to that, the episodes of Abigail, Bathsheba and Abishag, and the modern novelist for whom sex is the core of the human problem can well have a field day with an imaginative reconstruction of David's love life. In this book, David's life appears largely as a series of love frustrations, so that David the lover

overshadows both David, the King and David, the warrior, to say nothing of David, the singer. It is a rare writer these days who can work himself free of that major compulsive of our lives—the sex obsession. Miss Schmitt's proportions of emphasis are palpably those of the writer to whom the libido is the omnipotent king.

This emphasis is certainly not that of the Bible. The Biblical account contained in the Book of Samuel and written not long after David's death, is free of both prudishness and prurient detail, and is an undeniable witness to the motivation of its own characters. Later generations, (the Book of Chronicles, and the Talmud), sought to gloss over David's failings and present an idealized picture of him. By the Talmudic era, David had put on the raiment of the Melekh Yisrael who never dies and in his hidd cave awaits the hour of final redemptic The Rabbis' focus of interest in th idealized image of David, was the Ki Messiah (the descendant of David) in t role he was destined to play in eschat logy.

For all the book's faithfulness to h tory, its hero is a modern man, cor plexes and all, thrust back in time a space to the ancient Judaean hills. T Biblical image in the Book of Samu represents David as a contemporary his saw him and as he probably was. Ea age sees the heroes of history in its ow image. This book is no exception. Allo then, for this necessary correction in pe spective, and David the King remains rich, magnificent book, a capital event current literature.

THEODORE FRIEDMA

QUERY

By FRIEDA CLARK HYMAN

Each planet, star, each satellite
Each orb that studs the cosmic space
That ravishes the modest night
Revealing all her hidden grace,
Has each its own integrity
That to its separate lot it binds.
A glory and a mystery
To challenge every winged mind.

The hardy microcosmic seeds
Lie patiently in fecund soil
Content and wise they suck and feed
And garner strength to strain and toil
Against the pressured, pressing earth.
Till finally they surge and throng
Into the beckoning sun. Their birth
The rhythmic theme of Nature's song.

Man's magic mold, his sentient form
In dust of centuries was cast.
In it the skillful atoms swarm
Intent upon their special tasks.
To weave fresh flesh the while it mends
The old. To gather in the sheen,
The curve, the tune, and all that blends
Into a conscious deed or dream.
And gently, ere it seeks its rest
To hold new life upon its breast.

Oh ever was it right
The faithful stars in bright
Array should shine.
And that the buried seed
The sun's command should heed
To struggle forth.
And man's humanity
Its immortality
Should seek in babe.

But now . . . now . . .
Can it be so?
Should it be so?
Now,
After Dachau?

e Reconstructionist Seminar
n Youth Leadership

ONE of the most important events in Reconstruction-story took place over the Labor Day -end. We refer to the Seminar on n Leadership. As a forward looking ment, Reconstructionism has a na- appeal to our Jewish youth. For Reconstructionist program is not H by dogma and reckons realistically the needs and problems of Ameri-ews. Nevertheless, our movement has yet developed the techniques and nnel that would give it access to numbers of our young people. n can best be reached through youth The purpose of the Seminar was lly youth leaders from all over the try who had responded with interest econstructionist literature and who ss special qualifications for leader- The Seminar was to be devoted to cussion of the basic needs of Ameri- Jewish youth. It was hoped that iscussion would result in a plan for ng young people in the service of ism along Reconstructionist lines. hope was realized. The end result the launching of a permanent Re-ructionist Institute for Jewish Youth ership.

Personnel of the Seminar

e number invited to attend the nar was limited to thirty, so as to e an informal and intimate quality he discussion. These were chosen e basis of age (from 20 to 30 years), ational background—both general ewish—experience with youth move-s, and geographical distribution. thirty participants were young peo-rom as widely scattered points as Spokane, Wash.; Los Angeles, Cal.; Chicago, Ill.; Norfolk, Va.; Columbus, Ohio; and Syracuse, N. Y. About half came from New York City and vicinity. Among those attending were leaders in such movements as AZA and other B'nai B'rith Youth organizations, Junior Hadassah, Junior Mizrachi, Masada, Habonim, Young People's Hebrew League, Young Judaea, Kvutza, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, Young Men's Hebrew Associations, Community Councils, Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America, Synagogue and Center groups, Junior Unit of the American Jewish Congress. Also participating in discussions were some of the leaders of the Reconstructionist movement—Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, founder, and chairman of the Editorial Board; Dr. Ira Eisenstein, Associate chairman; Rabbi Eugene Kohn, Managing Editor; Rabbi Jack J. Cohen, Director of Fellowship Activities; Miss Hannah Goldberg, Executive Secretary; and Mr. Leopold J. Sneider, Chairman of the Education and Publications Committee of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation.

Dr. Kaplan's Address

The Seminar was held at Cejwin Camps, Port Jervis, N. Y., on Sunday, September 1st, and Monday, September 2nd. The keynote was sounded by Dr. Kaplan in the only formal address presented before the Seminar. He stressed re-education as the primary need of the world at the present time. With the menace of atomic warfare hanging over our heads it is important, he said, to realize that "thought is stronger than atomic energy," since on our thinking depends the use to which that energy will be put

—for enhancing life or for destroying it. For those nations that tend to commit violence, re-education must instill in them the idea that they dare not do so; for democratic nations, the idea that they dare not tolerate violence. In this role of re-education the Jews have a part to play: they must learn "not to surrender to violence at any cost."

To play this role Jews need to be re-educated by being given new courage, new incentives, and new resources to live as Jews. To provide these is the purpose of Reconstructionism. The incentives for a people to continue living consist of tradition, culture and social habit. "What we need in Jewish life is a tradition that we can accept, a culture that is vital, and social habits that are spiritually warming."

To acquire the courage for Jewish living is a problem of status. Jews must be re-educated to understand what is implied by the separation of Church and State in democratic countries. The function of the State is to provide social and economic security. The function of the Church is to give moral and spiritual security. Moral security means the feeling that the distinction between right and wrong is real (though men may be mistaken in their ideas of right and wrong). Spiritual security means the belief that life is worthwhile, so worthwhile that we must want to make the best of it. If we are to have the courage to live as Jews, we must reorganize our communal set-up so that there is one large social organization which performs for us the functions of the Church in a country in which Church and State are separated.

As for resources, the need for financial means is obvious. Those means must be provided adequately and promptly, not "too little and too late." But of even greater importance is the development of personnel resources, the training of leaders to assume responsibility for Jewish l "Thus we see the whole problem of construction of Jewish life as a probl of re-education. We are not trying to fi merely what is 'best for us Jews'. Ratl are we trying to find our place in Ame can life without surrendering those mo and spiritual principles which make l worthwhile."

Seeking a Theoretic Basis for Jewish Youth Work

After Dr. Kapan's address the enti problem was thrown open for discussio What the group sought first was to a rive at some agreement on the theoret basis for appealing to American Jewi youth. The discussion was candid, searc ing and fearless. But it was never heate for in the minds of all was the earne desire to reach agreement on fundame tals. The participants not only talked b listened, and did not hesitate to chan their opinions when convincing argumen were presented. Three full sessions of th seminar and a part of the fourth, wer given over to this quest for a basic un derstanding in approaching the proble

Among the questions that were raise in the course of the general discussio were such as these: How can we answe those who say that they do not need Jew ish tradition, culture, and social habit because the American equivalents suffic them for self-fulfillment? Granted tha it is in the interest of the Jewish people for Jews to concern themselves with Jewish problems, is it morally obligatory for all Jews to do so? Does concern with Jewish problems extend to religion? If so, how can we ask people who are not religious to feel an obligation for maintaining Jewish religion without asking them to be hypocrites? Has a Jew a right to change his religion and under what circumstances?

several points in the discussion, Dr. an took the floor to summarize the s made, bring thm into focus and y the issues. The result was that the carried away with them the follow- onvictions as to the outcome of their nged discussions:

ery member of a historic people or unity has the obligation not only to ttuate the life of the group but to it make the most of its life and man life generally. Only by accept- nis obligation can we develop better n beings and a better society. It is fore the moral obligation of all to concern themselves with the fun- ntal problems of Jewish life. These ot merely problems of what is good ne Jews but of how Jews can best ce human life—their own, their e's and mankind's. These problems their economic, political, social, cul- educational, ethical and religious ts. With all of these every Jew to concern himself.

n Jews who may not feel the need ersonal religious experience have the tion to seek an understanding of the ing of Jewish religion and its place wish life. Although in their personal us behavior they cannot be obligat- express a relation to God that they not experienced, they can be expect- foster "civic religion." By civic re- we mean the development of those Jewish institutions on which the n people depends for preserving the personality, such as the Sabbath oly days.

Theory to Implementation

e amount of time spent in the theo- discussion of these basic problems en to be fully justified by the facil- ith which the remaining problems handled. In the session and a half remaining, the seminar evaluated present Jewish youth movements and discussed problems of implementing the Reconstructionist program in youth activities. Although virtually all the Jewish youth movements of America were represented at the Seminar, there was general agreement that every one of them suffered from a too limited view of Judaism and of the needs of Jewish youth. Nevertheless, not only the legitimacy but the necessity of these movements with their special interests was recognized. The problem was how to advance the Reconstructionist ideal among our youth without entering into destructive competition with existing organizations.

The answer was the perpetuation of the Seminar group, with such additions as it may make to its membership in the future, as a Reconstructionist Institute for Jewish Youth Leadership. The members of the Institute were to engage in youth activities, either in existing youth movements or in working with those youths who are otherwise unaffiliated or who would prefer a more integrated Jewish program than is offered by any existing youth movement. In either case, the Institute was to aim at developing leadership and giving guidance to youth groups. Its membership was to be limited to the age group of 20 to 30 but it was to concern itself with training younger leaders in working with adolescents. The Institute was to reconvene some time in the winter vacation season, preferably in the Mid-West. If possible a two-week or more seminar for the group should be planned for next summer. Moreover those members of the Institute residing in or near New York should meet monthly and a small steering committee was elected at the concluding session which was charged to meet even more frequently and plan the activities of the Institute.

The committee consists of Moshe Decter, chairman, Sheba Cogan, Dorothy Dellar, Arthur Gilbert, Norman Schanin, Richard Sneider. The steering committee has already met and outlined activities for some time to come.

This account of the deliberations of the Seminar can only convey an inadequate picture of what took place. As important as were the sessions, the informal conversations around the table, the social give and take, the group singing, the Labor Day religious service, the beauty of the surroundings, the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Albert P. Schoolman who direct Cejwin Camps—all contributed to set an emotional tone to the Seminar which was of no less importance. The Reconstructionist Institute for Jewish Youth Leadership was launched under happy auspices and given a good initial momentum. May its future be equally auspicious!

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from Page* 8)

religion more than boys is perhaps to b accounted for by the neglect of past ger erations to give girls a Jewish educatio If so, there is at least this much comfo to be derived from the incident—it show that the Jewish education received by th young men, although doubtless far fro adequate, was not wholly ineffective i giving them a more affirmative attitud to Jewish religion.

JUSTICE

By SHIRLEY PINCUS KAUFMAN

Who speaks of justice in this unjust hour?
When no one will keep faith with those who cry,
And little men are driven back to die,
Uncared for by a world that worships power.
Who speaks of justice—when the word is sour,
Sadly bereft of beauty, parched and dry . . .
(A trusting people, nourished on a lie,
Learn that an empty promise is their dower.)

An aching, pleading remnant crawl today
Back to their home; they beat against the door
But find it bolted. And as they implore
The right to enter, they are forced away.
Who speaks of justice? Who would dare to mock—
The turning of the key within the lock!